



## March 12, 2025 Board Minutes

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Location:** Zoom/Telephone Call-in Meeting

**Minutes Taken By:** Tracey Edwards

**Time:** Meeting called to order at 11:02 am CST by Chase Christianson

**ELCNWF Staff members present in person:** Suzan Gage, Executive Director; Matt Bonner, Administrative Director;

**ELCNWF Staff present via Phone/Zoom:** Sam Sweazy, Finance Director; Ken Whitaker, Operations Director; Lindsay Holmes, Education Services Director; Tami Valdez, Community Development and Special Programs Director; Felecia Dorchuck; Accounts Receivable Specialist; Tracey Edwards, HR and Administrative Support Specialist

**Guests present:** Jeff Carter, Board Attorney;

**Full Board:** ☒ Yes ☐ No Quorum: Yes In attendance: 16/21

**Executive Comm.** ☒ Yes ☐ No

**Roll Call to Include Board Members on Zoom/Telephone:** Yes

| Executive Committee | First Name | Last Name    | Present | Present Via Phone/Zoom | Excused Absence | Unexcused Absence |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|---------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|                     | Tony       | Bennett      |         |                        | 1               |                   |
| ●                   | Rachel     | Chima        |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Chase      | Christianson |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Traci      | Corbin       |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Irvin      | Clark        |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Sharon     | Gaskin       |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Zach       | Gilmore      |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Kenneth    | Griffin      |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Tiffani    | Hinds        |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Jeanne     | Hitchcock    |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Miatta     | Jalaber      |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Missy      | Lee          |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
|                     | Gina       | McAllister   |         |                        | 1               |                   |
|                     | Mary       | McKenzie     |         |                        | 1               |                   |
| ●                   | Juliana    | Melara       |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Joe        | Seabrook     |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Joseph     | Taylor       |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Richard    | Williams     |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
| ●                   | Myrtis     | Wynn         |         | 1                      |                 |                   |
|                     | Erin       | Johnson      |         |                        | 1               |                   |
|                     | Veronica   | Watkins      |         |                        | 1               |                   |
|                     |            | <b>Total</b> |         | <b>16</b>              | <b>5</b>        |                   |

## Utilization Report for Direct Services

We reimburse contracted providers in each of the seven counties served. The information below shows the payment to School Readiness and VPK providers for direct services (slots) and compares the previous month.

| SCHOOL READINESS  |                                  |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|   | December 2024                    | January 2025                     |
| <u>School Readiness</u><br>Payments to Child Care Providers for Direct Services (Slots) | SR Slot Dollars – \$1,444,556.39 | SR Slot Dollars – \$1,456,152.93 |
|   | Children Paid – 2,414            | Children Paid – 2,389            |
|   |                                  |                                  |
| <u>VPK Program</u><br>Payments to Child Care for VPK services                           | December 2024                    | January 2025                     |
|   | VPK Payments – \$382,351.79      | VPK Payments – \$452,709.31      |
|   | Children Paid – 1,601            | Children Paid – 1,611            |

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, GUESTS, AND STAFF at 11:02 a.m. CDT by Chase Christianson
2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONENT AGENDA – Chase Christianson

*VOTE NEEDED: To approve the meeting agenda and the consent agenda as presented.*

**MOTION:** Dr. Irvin Clark moved to approve the meeting and consent agenda as presented.

*Seconded by* Tiffany Hinds

*Motion carried unanimously* with no members recusing from vote.

3. COMMITTEE/FULL BOARD REPORTS – Chase Christianson

### 3.1. Executive Committee- Chase Christianson

#### 3.1.1. Membership Appointments – *Vote Needed*

The following individuals are presented to the Board for approval of their appointments:

1. Mr. Thomas Register, District Schools Superintendent, Washington Co.-1st Term
2. Mr. Joseph Taylor, Private Sector, Washington Co.-1st Term
3. Mrs. Crista Miller, Faith-Based Provider Representative (Altha COG), Calhoun Co.-1st Term
4. Mrs. Myrtis Wynn, Private Sector, Franklin Co.-2nd Term

The Executive Director and Coalition staff are also working with the Bay Co. Commissioners to identify individuals who could serve as the Commissioners' appointee on the Board and be able to present an nominee by the May ELCNWF board meeting.

*VOTE NEEDED: To approve the appointments of board members as presented.*

**MOTION:** Kenneth Griffin moved to approve the meeting and consent agenda as presented.

*Seconded by* Miatta Jalaber

*Motion carried unanimously* with no members recusing from vote.

### 3.2. Finance Committee – Tiffani Hinds, Treasurer and Committee Chair

3.2.1. No Report

### 3.3. Policy and Personnel Committee- Joe Seabrook

3.3.1 No report.

### 3.4. Education and Program Committee- Dr. Irvin Clark

3.4.1. No report.

### 3.5. Development Ad Hoc Committee – Erin Johnson

3.5.1 Development Plan Update

The Committee and ELCNWF staff have been working to implement the strategies the Board approved in the FY25 development plan, including speaking engagements in each county. The Committee and staff are seeking Board members’ assistance with making connections with individuals, business, or foundations that can help ELCNWF financially with serving children and families in each county. If you can help make these connections, please contact Suzan.

## 4. Executive Director Overview

4.1. Organization Update

4.1.1. Legislative Updates

The Executive Director will share an update on any legislative visits, committee meetings, bills filed, and other information impacting early learning.

4.1.2. DEL Proposed Rule Changes

The Executive Director will share an update on proposed DEL rule changes impacting our programs. These rules are currently open for public comment and expected to be presented to the State Board of Education for approval at their April meeting. The rules include:

- |          |          |   |
|----------|----------|---|
| 4.1.2.2. | 6M-4.400 | Required Parent Copayment   |
| 4.1.2.3. | 6M-4.500 | Child Attendance and Provider Reimbursements  |
| 4.1.2.4. | 6M-8.700 | Provider on Probation; VPK Improvement Plan and Implementation;<br>1st Year Probation |
| 4.1.2.5. | 6M-9.115 | Procedures and Criteria for Approval of School Readiness Plans                        |

4.1.3. Chamber Presentations

The Executive Director and staff have continued ELCNWF’s “Where We Are” presentation to the Washington and Jackson County Chambers of Commerce. They will present to the Gulf Co. Chamber in March.

4.1.4. Visit from DEL Chancellor Miller

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, ELCNWF and providers had the privilege of a visit from DEL Chancellor Cari Miller. Chancellor Miller toured several of our School Readiness and VPK providers in Holmes, Washington, and Jackson counties and saw first-hand how they are providing quality early care and education to children in NWFL. During a lunch meeting, the Executive Director and staff were able to discuss challenges our Coalition faces with current regulations and opportunities for improvement. We would like to thank Chancellor Miller for taking time to visit our area and listen to provider's and staff's feedback

#### 4.1.5. April 9<sup>th</sup> Board Orientation

The Executive Director will hold an orientation on April 9th immediately following the board meeting for any new members, anyone who has not attended an orientation, and anyone else you would like a refresher on the organization. Please RSVP to Tracey Edwards at [tracey.edwards@elcnwf.org](mailto:tracey.edwards@elcnwf.org).

#### 4.2. Monthly Service Numbers

- 4.2.1. School Readiness and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist (*See SR and VPK Enrollment Numbers and SR Waitlist through January 2025*)
- 4.2.2. Contracted Providers (*See Total VPK Contracted Providers VS. VPK Programs with CLASS Scores as of January 2025*)
- 4.2.3. Education Services (*See January 2025 Service and Numbers for Education Services*)
- 4.2.4. Media Coverage/Activity/Events (*See January 2025 Media Coverage.Activity.Events*)
- 4.2.5. Child Care Resource and Referral Numbers (*See January 2025 Childcare Resource and Referral Service Numbers*)
- 4.2.6. Help Me Grow Service Numbers (*See Help Me Grow January 2025 Data Snapshot*)
- 4.2.7. Inclusion/Child Service Numbers (*See January 2025 Service Numbers for Child Services*)
- 4.2.8. Early Childhood Care Coordination (*See January 2025 Service Numbers*)
- 4.2.9. Contracted Provider CLASS Scores (*See January 2025 Service Numbers*)

#### 4.3. Coalition Fraud Update

- 4.3.1. ELCNWF staff have referred one School Readiness recipient case to DEL and the Bureau of Public Assistance Fraud (BPAF). The case is currently under review with BPAF to determine if it will be accepted. The Executive Director will continue to provide updates on this case and any new cases at upcoming board meetings.

#### 4.4. Internal Monitoring (*See Internal Monitoring Reports*)

- 4.4.1. No Report.

#### 5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REPORT

- 5.1. Melissa Lee reported two upcoming events in which the Coalition is invited to participate in : Bay County Child Abuse and Death Summit on April 16<sup>th</sup> and the Gulf Coast Resource Fair on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Matt announced Suzan Gage received the 50 Over 50 Award Nomination.

#### 6. PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the public are allowed up to 3 minutes each to address the board.

#### 7. NEXT MEETING: April 9, 2025

#### 8. ADJOURN: Meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.